REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 5-27 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 20 have been amended herein. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. DRAWINGS and SPECIFICATION

The drawings have been objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) and the specification has been objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. The Examiner contends that the "first water" and the "second water" are not described in the specification with corresponding numerical reference numbers.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the basis for the Examiners objections. What the "first water" and "second water" denote is clearly defined in claim 8 (as amended under PCT Article 34), and is described in detail in the specification in paragraphs starting at [0187]. "First water" and "second water", however, are not illustrated, because doing so is not practical in terms of understanding the invention. Furthermore, it is difficult to illustrate "first water" and "second water" because they are produced according to how the electrodes are controlled. Thus it is difficult to illustrate them in a form clearly distinguishable from each other in, for example, FIG. 9. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Examiner's objections.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 8 UNDER 35 USC §112, 2nd ¶

Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as lacking antecedent basis for the limitations "first water" and "second water".

Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection. It appears that the Examiner has not considered the claims as amended under PCT article 34, and has instead examined the original PCT claims. Claim 8, as currently pending, provides sufficient antecedent basis for the terms "first water" and "second water". Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC §112, second paragraph.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIM 1 UNDER 35 USC §102(b)

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Pastryk et al. (US 5,345,637).

Claim 1 recites that the adder of the water feeding apparatus is an ion eluter that elutes an antimicrobial and/or antifungal ion as the treatment substance and adds the ion to the water passing therethrough. Claim 1, as amended, further recites that the ion eluter includes an electrode from which a metallic ion is eluted and an outflow port through which the water is fed to the shower emitter, and the outflow port includes a first outflow port that is located in a position lower than a lower end of the electrode and a second outflow port that is located in a position higher than a higher end of the electrode. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found in original claims 3 and 4. Pastryk et al. fail to disclose or suggest the recited features. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 USC §102(b) should be withdrawn.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 2-4, 6-8 AND 11-27 UNDER 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 2-4, 6-8 and 11-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pastryk et al. in view of Tejeda (US 3,869,382). The Examiner contends that although Pastryk fails to teach an ion exchange material used within a washing machine, it would have been obvious to use the silver ion and electrode feature of Tejeda in the invention of Pastryk since it is known to use water softeners in household appliances.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention. Tejeda discloses a water softening apparatus that includes an ion exchanging material and electrodes 28 and 30 for detecting exhaustion of the ion exchanging material. Tejeda also discloses silver as a suitable material for the electrodes 28 and 30 (column 6, lines 54-68). However, the ion exchanging material of Tejeda is for absorbing Ca, Mg and like ions, and in exchange, releasing Na, H and like ions from water. The purpose of its use is to soften the water by removing the Ca, Mg and like ions. Moreover, adding Na, H and like ions does not produce an antimicrobial or antifungal effect as recited in claim 1. Furthermore, the function of electrodes 28 and 30 of

Tejeda is to detect exhaustion of the ion exchanging material in the water, and thus when to regenerate it, by monitoring the ion exchange material by passing an electric current through it (FIG. 1a; column 9, lines 13-59; column 6, lines 4-8; abstract). It is disclosed that the material of which the electrodes of Tejeda are composed is inconsequential and that any electrically conductive material can be utilized that is inert to the ion exchange resin and to the water. The electrodes of Tejeda are not for eluting an ion into water as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, the combination of the teachings of Tejeda with those of Pastryk would not result in the claimed apparatus and washer of claims 2, 6-8 and 11-27. Furthermore, with regard to claims 11-27, the Examiner has not specifically addressed any of these claims and therefore has not provided a *prima facie* basis for the rejection of these claims. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2, 6-8 and 11-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pastryk et al. in view of Obata et al. (US 5,029,458). The Examiner acknowledges that Pastryk fails to teach the claimed shower emitted having a vibrator that atomizes by vibration the water fed thereto, but contends it would have been obvious to combine the water spraying feature of the drying operation of Obata with Pastryk since it is a known and beneficial way of supplying fluid, resulting in even distribution and mixing.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention. Obata teaches spraying cooling water inside a duct 31 during the drying operation to lower the temperature within the duct and condense the moistened air to dehumidify the air when laundry is dried (column 10, lines 38-53). This technology is for dehumidifying exhaust air during drying. It is not for spraying fluid on laundry or for producing an antimicrobial effect as in the present invention. As discussed above, Pastryk fails to disclose or suggest an ion eluter that elutes an antimicrobial and/or antifungal ion as the treatment substance and adds the ion to the water passing therethrough. Even if one skilled in the art were to properly combine the teachings of Obata with those of

Pastryk, the result would not be the water feeding apparatus of claim 5. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pastryk in view of Tejeda and Obata. The Examiner contends that although Pastryk and Tejeda fail to teach a washing machine having drying functions, combination washer-dryers are well known, and thus it would have been obvious to have the washer-dryer feature of Obata added to Pastryk-Tejeda.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention. As discussed above with regard to Pastryk and Tejeda, even if one skilled in the art were to properly combine of the teachings of Tejeda with those of Pastryk, the resulting apparatus would not include an ion eluter that elutes an antimicrobial and/or antifungal ion as the treatment substance and that adds the ion to the water passing therethrough. Adding the washer-dryer feature of Obata to the combined teachings of Pastryk and Tejeda would not result in the washer of claims 9 and 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

IV. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, all claims 1-2 and 5-27 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

/Mark D. Saralino/
Mark D. Saralino
Reg. No. 34,243

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The Keith Building
1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113